

Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-June 16, 2020
Office of Agriculture- Jeremy Criss

1. The Office of Agriculture continues to update our COVID-19 Agricultural Business Resources page published on the OAG website.
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agservices/boards-committees/guidance-for-ag-business.html>

The following farmers have received financial assistance.

Michael Protas-\$6,000 MCEDC Local Production Fund

A total of 39 Agricultural business owners applied to the Public Health Emergency Grant Program-PHEG

14 Agricultural businesses received grant funding totaling \$113,526 PHEG

19 of the applicants did not meet the 50% reduction in revenues requirement.

3 applicants were non-responsive and/or did not provide the required/requested documentation.

3 applicants are not in Good Standing with the State of Maryland.

2. The Telework Assistance Program has received an additional appropriation \$1,250,000 from the County Council and MCEDC is administering the program. You can find all the necessary information here: <https://thinkmoco.com/telework-assistance-fund>

Linda Lewis received a \$2,500 grant from MCEDC Telework Assistance Program
Please note the Tim McGrath submitted the paperwork and Nancy Warfield-MCFB has inquired about this program.

3. The Pick Your Own Operations are starting for the 2020 season-Butlers Orchard, Homestead Farm, Rock Hill Orchard. All employees and customers are required to wear cloth face coverings including all customers age nine and above.
https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Documents/Maryland-Pick-Your-Own-Operations-During-COVID-19-State-of-Emergency-FAQs.pdf

The Waredaca Equestrian Competition for June 13-14, 2020 was approved by the County Health Officer Dr. Travis Gayles. This event involves between 80-100 people being spread out over the 198-acre farm. Please see the attached messages and pictures from this event.

4. Update on MC 6-20 Deer Hunting-Rifles used with Deer Management Permits. Jeremy Criss was contacted by Delegate Luedtke's office scheduled a committee meeting on June 10, 2020 to discuss this legislation that was assigned to summer study. The DNR Representatives announced they are proposing a new straight walled-25 caliber cartridge will be allowed for the all counties that allow rifles and this may include Montgomery County. This cartridge has a range of 250 yards, and it is more accurate than a shot gun.
5. The Office of Agriculture is continuing to work with the Montgomery County Food Council and Food Security Task Force to develop plans for expanding local food production. Approximately 8 farmers are willing to participate in this new Pilot Program with Food Assistance Providers like Manna Food Center and the Capital Area Food Bank to distribute food to people in need. The Council has received a funding request for \$41.5 million from the Department of Health to help people in the County that need food.
6. Hans Riemer is scheduling a joint PHED/ T&E County Council Committee Work Session on July 9 and 16, 2020 to discuss the Solar ZTA 20-01. All agricultural groups reaffirmed their opposition to the Solar ZTA as introduced. Amendments to the ZTA are pending.
7. Everyone should have received the message about the Pigs that are up for adoption. If you are interested, please contact Animal Services.
8. The County is executing the Agriculture and Horticulture Contract with Chuck Schuster. The UM-Extension has announced they will continue to move forward to replace Chuck's UME full time faculty tenured position.
9. The Agricultural Advisory Committee needs new farmer and non-farmer representatives. Please see the attached announcement where the deadline to apply is July 6, 2020: Michele Cropp, Ben Allnutt-3rd term-Ben has asked his son Russ to apply, Linda Lewis-3rd term-Linda can you assist me to find a new farmer member to serve on the AAC? Doug Lechliden-2nd term-Doug is eligible for waiver for 3rd term, Aliza Fishbein is interested in another 1 year term, Debra Tropp is interested another 1 year term, Leonard Yourman.
10. The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee needs a new farmer representative to replace Todd Greenstone-2nd term-This is a very important farmer representative that we need to identify.
11. Preliminary Draft Report Thrive 2050- <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Final-staff-report-vision-goals-policies-and-actions-for-6-11-20-PB-.pdf> The agricultural groups need to review this report and provide comments back to MNCPPC in July. Please see the attached message that Jeremy forwarded to MNCPPC to address the Profitability and Viability of the Agricultural Sector.

12. Update on the Schaeffer Road Bridge. Please see the attached messages from the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee.
13. The County has announced a 6% savings plan for FY21. This equates to \$ 60,000 for the Office of Agriculture. The proposed savings will come from a reduction in the MAEF Food Fiber and You- Mobile Science Lab and General Fund savings from the retirement of Melissa Steed.
14. Next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee- July 21, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Agricultural Advisory Committee-June 16, 2020-Cancelled

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- July 7, 2020

Montgomery Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors-July 10, 2020

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-July 14, 2020

Agricultural Advisory Committee-July 21, 2020

PHED/T&E Committee Work Session-Solar ZTA 20-01-July 9 & 16, 2020